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Encyclopedia Entry: Mycenaean Krater Fragment with Warriors

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Encyclopedia Entry: Mycenaean Krater Fragment with Warriors

Abstract

Greek, Late Helladic IIIB, c. 1250 BCE

Provenance: Said to come from Zygouries, Greece. Ex-collection J.P. Harland. Donated to the Ackland by the Classics Department, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill on March 2, 1977.

Disciplines

Ancient History, Greek and Roman through Late Antiquity | Byzantine and Modern Greek | Other Arts and Humanities | Sculpture

Comments

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VASES

Bronze Age

116 MYCENAEAN BASKET VASE

Greek, Mycenaean, Late Helladic IIIA2–B, c. 1400–1230 BCE
Provenance: Purchased by the Ackland on September 19, 1968, from Spink and Son, Ltd., London, who acquired it from the collection of Bruno Meissner, who purchased it from Ars Antiqua Luzern auction in 1961.

22.9 × 14.6 × 14.0 cm (9 × 5¾ × 5½ in.)

The William A. Whitaker Foundation Art Fund, 68.29.1

Exhibition: "A Tribute to Joseph Sloane" (November 13–14, 1998); "Journey into the Past: Ancient Mediterranean Art in Context" (January 26–March 23, 2003)

Publication: *Ars Antiqua Luzern, Auktion* 3, April 29, 1961, no. 79, repr. pl. 32

Vessel complete, the larger handle reattached in modern repair, small mend on lid. Chip missing on side. Glaze is worn in many areas. Once had a label on the base.

Wheel-made. Buff-tan fabric and washy black-brown painted decoration, often uneven.

The vase (Furumark form 94, Type 319) stands on three legs, each formed in three vertical sections.¹⁶² This closed vessel has a flat disc base, a body comprised of two semi-globular halves, and a collared neck. A large uneven, solid handle extends over the top of the vase. A semi-globular lid is attached to the vase by a smaller handle.

Handles and exteriors of legs are decorated with hatching. The lower half of the body is solid black; the base is plain. The juncture between the lower and upper halves is decorated with a hatched or lattice band. The upper half has a row of stacked chevrons topped by a continuous wavy line and band. The lid contains a small circle with lattice pattern at the center, surrounded by four vertical elements, each comprised of two hatched bands, reminiscent of a double foliate band. Some of these vertical patterns are separated by wavy lines. One additional element with this pattern occurs on the body between a chevron and the handle attachment.¹⁶³

The form of the Ackland Mycenaean basket vase is quite rare. The basket vase gets its name from the high handle, which resembles that of a basket. The same date range (Late Helladic IIIA2–B) is given by Furumark for all examples of basket vases based on evidence from excavated sites, including Ialysos on Rhodes.¹⁶⁴ Close comparisons for shape and design are Copenhagen 5789,¹⁶⁵ Fitzwilliam Museum (24.22b),¹⁶⁶ and a basket

vase in the Rhodes Museum.¹⁶⁷ The shape, the attached lid, and the painted decoration ultimately may have been inspired by designs in basketry,¹⁶⁸ though H. W. Catling found a possible development from metal stands in the ridge between the two semi-globular halves and in the curled feet of other examples.¹⁶⁹ In addition, this form may be connected with the Helladic pottery tradition of basket-handled jars, Furumark's Type 158 of Late Helladic II date, which may further correspond to an earlier Middle Helladic type.¹⁷⁰

This type appears to have been produced primarily on Rhodes, though examples occur sporadically elsewhere in Greece.¹⁷¹ Although the function of the vases is unknown, all basket vases with certain excavated contexts come from tombs, suggesting a possible function as "ceremonial equipment for the cult of the dead."¹⁷²

ME

162. A. Furumark, *Mycenaean Pottery I. Analysis and Classification* (Stockholm: Swedish Institute in Athens, 1972), 640.

163. The decoration includes Furumark, *Mycenaean Pottery* I, motifs 53 (wavy line), 58 (parallel chevrons), 61A (zig-zag), figs. 65, 67.

164. A. Furumark, *Mycenaean Pottery*, II. *Chronology* (Stockholm: Swedish Institute in Athens, 1972), 27; C. Mee, *Rhodes in the Bronze Age: An Archaeological Survey* (Warminster, England: Aris and Phillips, 1982), 17, pl. 13:5, baskets with similar shape and decoration, including the stacked chevrons, date no earlier than LH IIIA2.

165. C. Blinkenberg and K. F. Johansen, *CVA: Denmark* 1 (1924), pl. 47, no. 7; P. Mountjoy, *Regional Mycenaean Decorated Pottery*, II, *Deutsches Archäologisches Institut* (Rahden: Leidorf, 1999), 1012, no. 73, probably from a south Rhodian workshop; see also Furumark, *Mycenaean Pottery*, III, pl. 173, Copenhagen, NM 5590.

166. W. Lamb, *CVA: Fitzwilliam Museum* 2 (1936), pl. 5, no. 21.

167. A. Maiuri, "Jalisos: Scavi della missione archeologica Italiana à Rodi," *Annuario della R. Scuola Archeologica di Atene e delle Missioni Italiane in Oriente* 6–7 (1923–1924), 205, fig. 128.

168. Furumark, *Mycenaean Pottery*, I, 73–74.

169. H. W. Catling, *Cypriot Bronzework in the Mycenaean World* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), 219; see also pl. 39a, basket vase with unattached lid.

170. Furumark, *Mycenaean Pottery*, I, 34, 73.

171. Furumark, *Mycenaean Pottery*, I, 73.

172. A. Nicgorski, memo in Museum file, April 21, 1989.

117 MYCENAEAN KRATER FRAGMENT WITH WARRIORS

Greek, Late Helladic IIIB, c. 1250 BCE

Provenance: Said to come from Zygyouries, Greece. Ex-collection J. P. Harland. Donated to the Ackland by the



116 (68.29.1)

Classics Department, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill on March 2, 1977.

7.0 × 7.6 cm (2¾ × 3 in.)

Gift of the Classics Department, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, from the Estate of Dr. J. P. Harland, 77.8.1

Exhibition: "A Tribute to Joseph Sloane" (November 13–14, 1998); "Journey into the Past: Ancient Mediterranean Art in Context" (January 26–March 23, 2003)

Single fragment from a painted krater, near outward-curving rim. Some paint chipped. Light yellow clay with brownish-red paint. Wheel-made. Wide painted band near top.

The heads of two male figures in profile to right. The small round heads are topped by long, triangular helmets curled at the end and painted in outline with near-vertical stripes. The profile heads have frontal eyes rendered as two circles on the side of each face and small, pointed noses and mouths; a small dot marks the pupils of the figure at right. The figures, whose upper bodies lean back, carry long, pointed, striped objects that could be spears. A chariot may be indicated in an abbreviated fashion along the line of the lower left break.



117 (77.8.1)

This fragment is said to come from Zygyouries, a Bronze Age settlement between Corinth and Mycenae in the northeastern Peloponnese. The light-colored clay is typical of this area and, thus, the vase is probably of local manufacture. The rendering of the figures is striking. The combination of a double frontal eye and a profile face is unusual; in fact, Furumark does not cite any Aegean examples.¹⁷³ More often, a profile head has only one eye, though in frontal view.

It seems likely that the figures on the Ackland fragment stood in a chariot, as chariot scenes were common in the Ripe

Pictorial phase of the Late Helladic period (c. 1300–1220 BCE). In most chariot scenes, the figures face the same direction and are similarly represented. The face is profile with a large, circular frontal eye, usually with a dot for the pupil. The profile nose and mouth are usually more pronounced than in the Ackland piece. Sometimes the garment is filled in with parallel lines (either vertical or horizontal) or dots, and the figures are often bare-headed. A large sherd from an amphoroid krater found at Mycenae provides a partial parallel for the Ackland fragment.¹⁷⁴ On that piece, a groom leads a chariot, driven by two men. Each head, in silhouette, forms an irregular circle with a protruding lump in back, a long, pointy nose in front. The eye is directly behind the nose. The upper body of these figures leans back, as on the Ackland fragment.

No exact parallels for the helmets depicted on the Ackland piece are known, but similar types exist. A fragment from Mycenae shows a boxer wearing a helmet, which has a low dome with vertical stripes.¹⁷⁵ Another fragment from Mycenae, from the latter part of the thirteenth century BCE, depicts a bull jumper wearing a tall cap with cross-hatching.¹⁷⁶ More comparable examples come from the Near East. A fragmentary Mycenaean krater from Ugarit, dated to the Late Pictorial phase (c. 1200 BCE), has a warrior on each side.¹⁷⁷ Each warrior holds a horse and wears a triangular headpiece with a long tail curled into a spiral, suggesting a "Phrygian cap." The figures have a profile similar to those on the Ackland fragment, though with one circular eye and a dot mid-forehead.

The figures on the Ackland fragment are not too-distant predecessors for the figures on the Mycenaean Warrior Vase (c. 1200 or later).¹⁷⁸ The striped feature next to each figure on the Ackland fragment might be a long spear. A fragmentary Mycenaean rhyton contains parts of at least three warriors in procession, each carrying a long spear in the right hand above shoulder height.¹⁷⁹ Each spear extends almost to the adjacent warrior. Striping, both vertical and horizontal, and cross-hatching are common decorative motifs of the period.

RLM

173. A. Furumark, *Mycenaean Pottery* (Stockholm: Swedish Institute in Athens, 1972), I, 437.

174. E. Vermeule and V. Karageorghis, *Mycenaean Pictorial Vase Painting*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982), 211, no. IX.2; A. J. B. Wace, et al., "Mycenae, 1939–1952," *BSA* 48 (1953), 6, pl. 1b, from a LH IIIB context.

175. Vermeule and Karageorghis, *Mycenaean Pictorial*, 212, no. IX.18; Mycenae 60–237; W. Taylour, "The Citadel House," in J. Chadwick, ed., *The Mycenae Tablets III*, *Transactions, American Philosophical Society* 52:7 (1963), 44, fig. 91.

176. Vermeule and Karageorghis, *Mycenaean Pictorial*, 212, no. IX.18.1; Mycenae, rhyton (?) fragment, Athens NM 2675.

177. Vermeule and Karageorghis, *Mycenaean Pictorial*, 229, no. XIII.28; RS 27.319; *Ugaritica* V, 765–766, pls. 3–7.

178. Vermeule and Karageorghis, *Mycenaean Pictorial*, 222, no. XI.42; Athens NM 1426; cf. A. M. Snodgrass, *Arms and Armor of the Greeks*, 2nd ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1999), 31.

179. Inv. RS. 24.521; see C. F. A. Schaeffer, et al., *Ugaritica* VI (Paris: C. Klincksieck, 1969), 117–118, fig. 16.